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ABSTRACT

This report is an evaluation of a selected New York City Umbrella program, funded under a special grant from the New York State Legislature. The primary goal of the program was to improve the reading achievement of first and second grade pupils in selected schools through the use of photographs taken by the pupils. The program was conducted in six elementary schools in four school districts in New York City and involved approximately 280 pupils who had scored two years or more below grade level on citywide reading tests. Seven second grade and three first grade classes were included in the program. Two of the second grade classes were bilingual. The program was staffed by a coordinator, an educational associate, two educational assistants, two teacher aides, and two student aides. The evaluation objectives were: (1) to determine the extent to which the program was implemented in accordance with the specifications described in the program proposal; (2) to determine whether 70% of the first grade pupils and 90% of the second grade pupils would master the ten selected instructional objectives chosen from the Prescriptive Reading Inventory, Red Book, Level A; and, (3) to determine whether pupil attitudes toward school would improve as demonstrated by increased school attendance. Although program guidelines were fully implemented, the absence of ongoing professional supervision and direction of the instructional process and teacher misinterpretation of the objectives of the program resulted in an undertaking that lacked the necessary elements of an educational program. With regard to pupil reading performance, grade one pupils attained their criterion level for two out of the ten instructional objectives. Grade two pupils did not attain criterion level for any of the ten selected objectives. Since program pupil attendance was already high at the beginning of the program and slightly higher than nonprogram pupil attendance, expectations of additional increases in attendance by program classes were found to be unrealistic. Tabled data and recommendations are included in the report. (Author/BS)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 20-63432

PICTURES AS A BASIS FOR TEACHING READING

SCHOOL YEAR 1975-1976

Dr. Cynthia H. Almeida

An Evaluation of Selected New York City Umbrella Programs funded under a Special Grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1975-1976 school year

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CHAPTER I

The Program

The Pictures as a Basis for Teaching Reading program was a component within the umbrella program entitled "Selected New York City Umbrella Programs" (Function No. 20-63432), funded by a special grant from the New York State Legislature for the school year 1975-76. The purpose of the program was to improve the reading achievement of first and second grade pupils in selected schools, through the use of photographs taken by the pupil as a basis for teaching reading. Pupil attendance at school was also expected to increase as a result of participation in the program. The program had been recycled from the previous year.

According to program specifications, each child was to receive an instamatic camera, film, flash bulbs and a notebook album. Under the supervision of the teacher, the children were to take pictures in and out of school and later write stories about them in class. Oral expression of stories was expected to precede achievement in the writing of individual stories. Pupil stories were to be discussed in class, and used as a reading text. The development of a vocabulary notebook for each child based on individual experiences was prescribed. It was the program's objective that the camera be used as an educational tool in order to integrate and strengthen language arts concepts in all areas of the curriculum and thereby provide a broad base for the development of reading skills.

The program was to be conducted in six elementary schools spread

over four school districts in New York City, involving approximately 400 first and second grade pupils. The pupil population was to be selected from schools which had scored two years or more below grade level on citywide reading tests. Ten classes comprised the program, seven second-grade and three first-grade classes. Two second-grade classes were also bilingual, providing instruction in Spanish and English.

Personnel assigned to the program were: an assistant principal as coordinator, an educational associate as the staff member in charge, two educational assistants, two teacher aides, and two student aides. The coordinator's role was: to assist in the preparation of all written materials relevant to the program, revising the teacher manual and student picture workbook; to select supplementary reading materials to aid the program's effectiveness; to provide overall supervision of the implementation of the program; and to assist in the preparation and operation of all workshops. Teacher training was to be conducted through workshops of two four-hour sessions held prior and during the program. Teachers were to receive a copy of the Teacher's Manual and ongoing guidance in the implementation of the program. Parent workshops were designed to teach parents ways to tutor their children in reading. Overall supervision of the paraprofessional staff was also the coordinator's responsibility. All of the above described activities were to be completed during the one hour twice a week assigned in the funding proposal.

The staff member in charge was assigned the following responsibilities: coordination and implementation of the program under the supervision of the coordinator and the assistant principal in each school; establishment

of a library of materials for teacher, paraprofessional, and parent use; weekly visits to each classroom in the role of liaison between the coordinator and the schools; distribution of supplies and processing of all film utilized in the program; guidance of paraprofessionals; and preparation of time sheets for personnel in the program. The staff member in charge was to be assigned full time to the program with additional two hours per week being allocated for the purpose of after-school meetings with the coordinator.

CHAPTER II

Evaluative Procedures

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE I

To determine the extent to which the program was implemented in accordance with the specifications described in the funding proposal.

Subjects

Ten first and second grade classes and all program personnel.

Methods and Procedures

Observational visits to the ten program classes to observe lessons and activities conducted as part of the program along with interviews with program personnel. Ten school visits were made, two visits to each of four schools and one visit to each of the remaining two schools.

Data Analysis

Observational and interview data to be analyzed and presented in narrative form.

Time Schedule

February to May.

EVALUATIVE OBJECTIVE II

To determine whether as a result of participation in the program 70 percent of the first grade pupils and 90 percent of the second grade pupils will master the ten selected instructional objectives chosen from the Prescriptive Reading Inventory, Red Book, Level A.

Subjects

All first and second grade pupils involved in the program.

Methods and Procedures

Data will be analyzed to ascertain whether the chosen criterion levels of 70 percent for the first grade and 90 percent for the second grade, had been attained for the ten selected instructional objectives.

Data Analysis

Data to be presented in tabular and narrative form indicating the percentage of pupils achieving mastery for each of the ten selected instructional objectives.

Time Schedule

Pretest administration of the Prescriptive Reading Inventory to be conducted in the fall of the school year, with the posttest administration to be conducted in the last week of April.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE III

As a result of participation in the program, there will be a statistically significant (.05 level) improvement in student attendance for the target school year as compared with their attendance for the

previous school year.

The above objective was changed in an addendum to read as: To motivate program participants to improve their attitudes towards school and school activities, as measured by a comparison of school attendance records for the program year of these pupils with special needs with the attendance records of a control group of pupils in the same grade who are not eligible to be included in the special needs category.

Subjects

All first and second grade pupils involved in the program.

Methods and Procedures

Comparison of program pupil attendance at school for the months of October and March, with the attendance record of a comparision group of equal size in the same grade and school.

Data Analysis

Data to be presented in tabular and narrative form indicating whether attendance at school was significantly higher (.05 level) for the program classes as compared with classes of equal size selected from the same grade in each school using the t test of statistical significance.

Time Schedule

Attendance records for the months of October and March of the school were to be analyzed.

CHAPTER III

Findings

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE I

To determine the extent to which the program was implemented in accordance with the specifications described in the program proposal.

Program Organization

Six elementary schools located in four school districts participated in the program. Total pupil enrollment was approximately 280 first and second grade pupils rather than the 400 pupils described in the proposal. It was reported by the coordinator that the figure of 400 had been based on projections made in June 1975 whereas the fall registers were found to be much below this number. In addition, one school which was to have had two program classes was withdrawn from the program by the Citywide Umbrella Coordinator. Program schools fitted the proposed criterion of scoring two or more years below grade level on citywide reading tests. Within each school, the principal and assistant principal chose the classes that they felt would benefit most from the program and then asked the teachers assigned to these classes if they would agree to participate in the program.

The program involved ten classes, seven at the second grade level and three at the first grade level. Two second-grade classes were also bilingual, conducting instruction in Spanish and English. Each class was serviced by a regular tax levy teacher and a paraprofessional paid from program funds. The six paraprofessionals assigned to the classrooms included two educational assistants, three teacher aides, and two student

aides.

Overall supervision of the program was conducted by the coordinator with the day-to-day implementation of the program being conducted by the staff member in charge, who acted as the liaison between the coordinator and the program personnel.

The program was plagued by uncertainty with regard to funding at the beginning of the school year, so that definite decisions about the program's status were completed in December. In April it became clear that there were some process funds left over which could be used to supply one other class. Thus a fourth-grade class was selected in one of the schools which already had two classes in the program. Tne time schedule of the evaluation program necessitated that the fourth grade class be excluded from the report.

As part of the evaluation process, the program pupils were to be group tested on ten instructional objectives selected by the coordinator from the Prescriptive Reading Inventory, Red Book, Level A, in December and April of the school year.

Instructional Program

Initial instructions to program teachers were brief, namely, that teachers should use the program as they saw fit. A copy of the Teacher's Manual containing suggestions for class activities was distributed to provide guidance through the school year. Teachers were notified about procedures for distribution of supplies, processing of film rolls and testing for the evaluation.

Consequent to the initial instructions received, teacher conduct

of the program resulted in wide variations observed for every aspect of the program. First, the objectives of the program were perceived differently from that of the program coordinator. Nine out of ten teachers reported viewing the program as primarily a writing program despite the title "Pictures as a Basis for Teaching Reading." Some of this confusion arose because most of the classes were also involved in special reading programs, e.g., DISTAR, CURETON, besides receiving additional reading assistance through the Strengthened Early Childhood and English as a Second Language programs. Secondly, the frequency of usage of the program during the week ranged from one period five times a week to one period every three or four weeks. The most frequent pattern of usage was once a week for 15-40 minutes, at the end of the day.

Another area in which wide variations were observed was that of the lessons conducted as part of the program. Generally speaking the lessons involved the following sequence of activities: (1) Selection of topic or subject to be photographed. The pupils were either left completely free to choose a subject(s) to photograph within a particular area, e.g., the family, or else assigned a specific subject within a topic, e.g., a particular community worker for a social science lesson on community workers in the neighborhood. (2) Pupil use of the camera to fulfill class assignment. The actual photographing of subjects was done either at home or on class trips with or without the assistance of an adult. (3) Opening individual packets of photographs received from the developer. Much excitement prevailed as pupils eagerly opened their packets, usually received a week later, and observed their handiwork.

Photographs were shared excitedly with the teacher and other pupils.

(4) Writing of stories about selected photographs. A small number of pupils, more in the second grade than in the first grade, were able to write stories/descriptions by themselves. Teachers were consulted for spelling and specific vocabulary. Teachers corrected the first draft and then had the pupils copy them into their notebook albums. Since the first drafts were either discarded altogether or filed somewhere other than in the notebooks, pupils had little opportunity to learn from previous mistakes. The majority of the pupils dictated their descriptions to the teacher or paraprofessional who wrote them down and gave them to the pupils to copy into their notebook albums.

Other activities conducted in connection with the program by 50 percent of the teachers were: use of the written stories as a reading exercise; comprehension exercises based on the written stories; arithmetic exercises based on the written stories, and many writing experiences, e.g., letters of thanks for special programs that the pupils had been invited to in the school, letters to Pen Pals, letters to mothers for Mother's Day.

While each child in the program received an instamatic camera, film, flash bulbs and an album notebook, lack of direction with regard to the selection of subjects to be photographed often resulted in numerous shots of the same subject, spoiled film, and unnecessary pupil disappointment. The film development process and class pick-up and delivery by the staff member in charge was described as excellent by seven out of ten

teachers. Film supplies were plentiful and readily available. The instamatic cameras provided were rated as being sturdy, efficient, and easy to use. Good responsibility was demonstrated by pupils and parents in caring for the cameras when taken home.

Pupil stories ranged from single sentences to five or six sentences with the pupil notebook albums containing many more pictures than stories. Pupil eagerness to write about the pictures was observed in several classes including those where the pupils were unable to write by themselves. Dictionaries were rarely used; the pupils preferred asking the teacher or paraprofessional for the spelling of words. In a couple of the classes teachers reported that the paraprofessionals were lacking in certain reading and writing skills and as such were instructing the pupils incorrectly.

Five out of ten teachers reported using the stories for reading and comprehension exercises; the camera was rarely used to develop lessons in other curriculum areas. The teacher's manual was occasionally referred to by three out of ten teachers, but there was little evidence of planned lessons involving the use of the cameras in activities other than writing stories about the pictures taken.

Trips to places of interest in the city and around the school neighborhood were specially important and integral to the program, because the trips could provide pupils with interesting experiences to be photographed and brought back to the classroom for study in many curriculum areas. But unfortunately, only two teachers used trips as an integral part of the program by taking their children for directed tours/walks

around the neighborhood and to selected places of interest in the city. The other eight teachers did not conduct neighborhood trips for safety reasons and planned to use the cameras on the class' regular annual trip.

Parent participation in the program was extremely limited with only three schools having held any meeting with parents to date to discuss the program.

In summary, the wide variations observed in the instructional program reflected the administrative structure of the program. The program coordinator was a full-time assistant principal assigned to work in the program one hour twice a week after school. While the overall supervision of the program rested with the coordinator, the day-to-day supervision and implementation was left to each individual school administration. Nominal supervision was reported for only three of the six schools. Further, the staff member in charge was to function as liaison in the vital communication chain between coordinator and program personnel, but because of her paraprofessional status could not become directly involved in the instructional program, that is, to administer direction or guidance to the teachers. Consequently, the teachers were left to function on their own without anyone to turn to for professional assistance. The coordinator attempted to keep in touch with the schools and the teachers through a periodic newsletter.

The staff member's principal responsibility in terms of time involved was observed to be the film development process, that is, collecting the used rolls from each class each week and returning the developed photographs a week later. She was also responsible for the distribution of supplies,

newsletters, etc., and related program paperwork such as attendance records, and time sheets. Some time was given to inservice training of a couple of paraprofessionals in need. As a representative of the program on the Advisory Council of the Umbrella Programs she was involved in organizing an exhibition of the program's work at the Board of Education in March. Each year a "Primer" is compiled of pupil work as additional reading material for the pupils. The staff member in charge was responsible for gathering the material which is expected to be published in June and distributed to each program pupil.

The bilingual classes suffered the same problems as the other classes. Theoretically the pupils were to learn to write stories in English and in Spanish, but in practice it was observed that only a small number of pupils in one class had written a story in Spanish.

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the previous evaluation report was partially achieved. On the positive side, cameras and film were maintained in good supply and easily available, and bilingual classes had been added to the program. On the negative side, inclusion of CRMD classes, upper grades, and the allocation of a school bus for photographic exploration trips were not feasible within the limits of the program budget.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE II

To determine whether as a result of participation in the program 70 percent of the first grade pupils and 90 percent of the second grade pupils will master the ten selected instructional objectives chosen from the Prescriptive Reading Inventory, Red Book, Level A.

Results

All the pupils in the program were included in the data analysis of this objective, but due to transfers during the school year and absence on either the pretest or posttest dates, the final total was 267 instead of 280. An analysis of the results shown in Table 1 (page 14) reveals that the chosen criterion level of 70 percent first grade pupils having mastered the selected objectives was attained for only two out of the ten objectives, syllables: number, and compounds recognition. At the second grade level the chosen criterion level of 90 percent of the pupils achieving mastery was not attained for any of the ten selected instructional objectives.

Misunderstanding of the program's objectives by the vast majority of teachers, and the absence of any procedural structure, direction and supervision in the program, contributed much to the failure recorded. Also since the program only began in December, the period between the pretest and the posttest was only four months, and was too short a time in which to expect substantial change or growth.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE III

To determine whether as a result of participation in the program, pupil attitudes toward school and school activities have improved as measured by comparing program pupil attendance with attendance of a comparison group of approximately the same size, in the same grade of each school.

Table 1

Percentage of Pupils Showing Mastery of Selected Instructional Objectives

Instructional Objectives	Grade One						Grade Two					
	Pupils Showing Mastery						Pupils Showing Mastery					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%
Phonics Analysis												
1. Consonant Substitution: Blends	83	43	51.8	74	35	47.3	169	57	33.7	159	88	55.3
2. Consonant Substitution: Initial and Final	83	33	39.8	78	40	51.3	169	93	55.0	133	87	65.4
3. Syllables: Number	83	35	42.2	77	54	70.3	167	47	28.1	148	83	56.1
Structural Analysis												
4. Endings and Affixes	80	20	25.0	78	41	52.6	169	56	33.1	157	75	47.8
5. Pronouns	80	42	52.5	75	48	64.0	169	61	36.1	155	95	61.3
6. Compounds: Recognition	79	29	36.7	78	57	75.6	169	63	37.2	156	111	71.2
7. Sentence Building: Subject-Predicate	78	21	26.9	78	29	37.2	168	32	19.0	157	60	38.2

Table 1 (continued)

Instructional Objectives	Grade One						Grade Two					
	Pupils Showing Mastery						Pupils Showing Mastery					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%	Total No. of Pupils Tested	N	%
Translation												
8. Like or Unlike Definitions: Word Definitions	79	26	32.9	76	28	36.8	164	33	20.1	156	60	38.5
9. Like or Unlike Definitions: Synonyms	79	45	57.0	76	44	57.9	162	57	35.2	150	84	56.0
10. Sentence Sense	79	40	50.6	75	35	46.7	162	78	48.1	157	69	43.9

Results

Comparison classes of pupils were randomly selected for each school with the primary consideration being to match as closely as possible the size of the program class. Attendance data were analyzed for the months of October and March, representing the beginning and end of the program year.

An examination of the attendance data reported in Table 2 (p. 17) revealed two important facts. First, the average attendance of the program classes (20 days) and the comparison classes (19 days) was high for the month of October or beginning of the program. Secondly, in six out of ten cases, the average attendance of the program classes was slightly higher than the average attendance of the comparison classes. Consequently, expectations of significant increases in school attendance by the program classes could not be realized and the attendance figures reported in Table 2 support this observation. Only one program class in the study obtained a significantly higher average attendance than its corresponding comparison class for the month of March (end of program). But since seven out of ten program classes obtained higher attendance averages than the comparison classes for the same period, the program classes may be said to have maintained a higher level of attendance throughout the school year.

Table 2

t Values Comparing Attendance of Program Classes with Comparison Classes

	October					March				
	Comparison Class		Program Class			Comparison Class		Program Class		
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	t Value	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	t Value
Grade One										
Class A	26	18.7	22	19.9	.94	31	19.9	31	19.4	.57
Class B	30	15.7	31	19.2	5.28**	32	18.9	31	20.1	1.50
Class C	26	17.8	26	19.0	.98	30	18.1	30	19.2	1.03
Grade Two										
Class D	26	20.4	32	20.3	.24	27	20.3	32	20.9	1.07
Class E	27	19.8	28	20.4	.82	30	18.6	26	21.2	2.91**
Class F	23	17.7	20	19.3	1.32	28	17.0	19	19.8	1.97
Class G	23	18.9	15	19.7	.58	27	20.1	20	20.3	.20
Class H	29	20.9	26	20.8	.26	28	21.1	25	19.6	1.61
Class I	29	19.8	33	18.6	1.54	31	18.1	28	17.6	.32
Class J	26	20.0	23	19.5	.51	29	19.4	25	19.5	.17

**.01 level of significance

Total school days in October = 22
Total school days in March = 23

CHAPTER IV

Summary of Major Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The major objectives of the Pictures as Basis for Teaching Reading program were: (1) to conduct a reading program of certain specifications, for the purpose of (2) raising the reading performance of first and second grade pupils in selected schools that had scored two or more grades below grade level on citywide reading tests. In addition, (3) pupil attitudes toward school were expected to improve and be demonstrated through increased attendance at school.

Although program guidelines with regard to pupil enrollment, personnel allocations, material supplies, and film processing procedures were fully implemented, the absence of ongoing professional supervision and direction of the instructional process, and teacher misinterpretation of the objectives of the program, resulted in an undertaking that lacked the necessary elements of an educational program.

With regard to raising pupil reading performance to reach selected criterion levels, grade one pupils attained their criterion level for two out of the ten instructional objectives, whereas grade two pupils did not attain criterion level for any of the ten selected objectives. Since program pupil attendance at school was already high at the beginning of the program and slightly higher than nonprogram pupil attendance at school, expectations of additional increases in attendance by the program classes were found to be unrealistic. Program classes maintained a high

level of attendance throughout the school year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings reported, that the instructional program did not receive ongoing professional supervision and direction, the results obtained with regard to improving reading performance could only be considered expected outcomes of the prevailing circumstances in the program. In the absence of a complete trial of the program's stated reading objectives this year, it is recommended that the program be recycled with the following suggestions:

1. A coordinator be appointed to provide professional direction and supervision to the instructional program throughout the school year.

2. Clarification of the program's instructional objectives to ensure uniform implementation of the program.

3. Organization of the uniform procedures with regard to number of times per week the program is implemented, and duration of an instructional period.

4. An orientation meeting of all the teachers involved be conducted by the coordinator in one central place to explain the objectives and teaching and testing procedures of the program.

5. Organization and conduct of an ongoing inservice training program for teachers and paraprofessionals, at which demonstration lessons using the program be given by the coordinator and experienced teachers of the program. These training sessions should span the school year and provide an opportunity for teachers to share their experiences.

6. Voluntary participation in the program by teachers in the target schools.

7. Selection of paraprofessionals for the program proficient in first and second grade reading and writing skills.

8. Organization of a pupil exhibition where the children of different program schools could meet one another to share their work.

9. Selection of alternate modes of assessment of the effectiveness of program to replace pupil attendance. Possible suggestions would be to examine changes in pupil interests and/or changes in pupil writing skills over the school year.